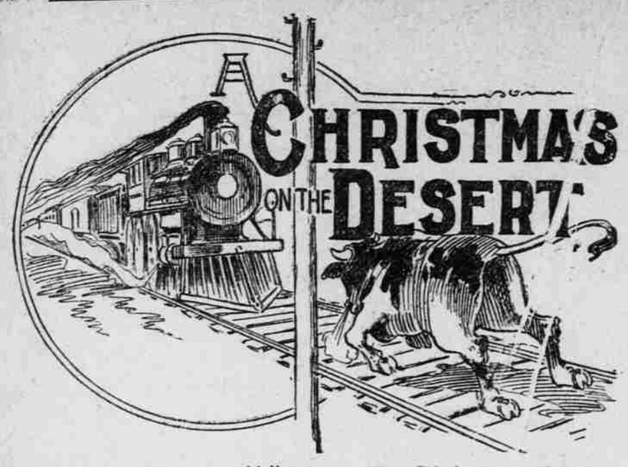


Passenger train No. 2 was whirling its load of humanity over the Mohave desert, a great, wide expanse of mid-mountain country whose parched bosom has exposed many an uncanny secret of death from thirst and Indian deviltry. Wearied with the monotonous view of treeless, waterless plains, the passengers gladly welcomed the approach of twilight. The sun went down in an angry glare, outlining the bare peaks of a far-away range in fantastic forms, and gradually, as night came on, there were more hopeful signs of vegetation. It was the 24th of December, and most of the passengers were building on spending a merry Christmas in the favored spots of the land of sunshine and flowers—California.

Suddenly we heard the warning shriek of the engine, and saw a scattered band of cattle flying away in terror from either side of the track. Again the engine shrieked, the train jerked nervously and seemed to sway uncertainly on its course.

The next moment we were bounding along the ties in an uncomfortable and terrifying manner. The cries of startled women were drowned in the roar of escaping steam, and panic-stricken men looked vainly for means of escape. A group of Mexicans, awakened from sleep by the jar, plunged headlong through an open window as though the devil were after them. The train finally spent its speed, and the thoroughly frightened passengers emerged to learn the number of the dead and wounded, and to tender what aid they could. The engine was completely hidden in a great cloud of steam, which marked its position about half the length of the train. When the steam finally exhausted itself, a sad wreck was exposed. The tender of the engine was upturned, and the engineer sat upon a piece of wreckage dazedly nursing an injured hand. The fireman was some distance away, his hair and whiskers singed by the hot outpour from the engine. Neither was seriously injured, and not a passenger was scratched. Beside the track, shivering in the throes of death, lay a handsome steer—the cause of all the trouble. His neck had been twisted by a mad rush at the cowcatcher. As the engineer's eyes fell upon the form of the animal a smile of satisfaction spread over his wan face, as he said:

"That critter must have been in the bull fights at some time in his career, for when he spied that red flag yonder on the cowcatcher, he shook his head viciously and refused to leave the track with the rest of them. I slowed up and whistled several times to give him a chance, but he only snorted defiantly, kicked his heels in the air and kept on his stubborn course. Finally he turned, and I opened the throttle wide, thinking that the best method of throwing him clear of the track. With an angry roar he came full at the engine, his head bent low to the track. We all know the rest."

The steer at once became an object of great interest to the relic fiend. One man secured a horn and another cut out a tooth, and the next day various camera views were taken of the valiant animal that had wrecked a train.

We were twenty miles from the next station, and the eastbound passenger was due within an hour. Luckily a telegraph operator was on the train and the wires were hastily tapped so that the dispatchers could be informed of the accident and hold the trains both ways.

We passed a cheerless night on the desert, and Christmas morning found us a disconsolate party. There was no dining car attached to the train, and those travelers that were not provided with lunch baskets railed at the ill-luck that had placed them in so miserable a plight. Finally, some of them went on a foraging expedition, and down the track a few miles they located a section house controlled by Mexicans. Here they appeased their hunger on frijoles, chile con carne and the other warm dishes of the natives. A wrecking train at length arrived on the scene, but the work of repair was slow and tedious. Several yards of track had been torn up, and it was necessary to construct a "shoo-fly" around the wreck. This took the greater part of the day. Meanwhile the passengers looked on in a helpless way, and all vowed that they had never passed a Christmas amid such desolate surroundings.—C. N. Stark.

Santa Will Stay.

There are a lot of people
  Who love to wag their jaws
And tell the children plainly
  There is no Santa Claus.

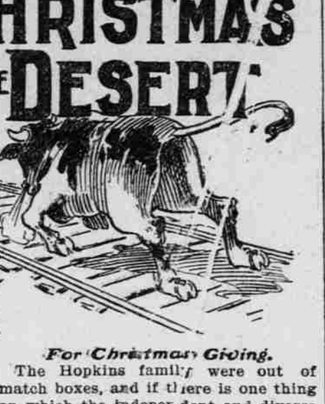
No Santa Claus—what nonsense
  Down childish throats to ram,
You might as well inform them
  There is no Uncle Sam!

R. K. Munkittrick.

For Christmas Giving.

The Hopkins family were out of match boxes, and if there is one thing on which the independent and diverse minded Hopkins family stands as a unit it is that a match box be provided for every room. One by one the boxes had disappeared. The tin ones had fallen to pieces and the china ones had broken and for two weeks the Hopkins family trotted to the saucer of matches on the parlor mantel or to the pasteboard box in the kitchen when they wanted a light. Their gas bill increased perceptibly, for with so much trouble as it took to light the gas one could not turn it off so instantaneously as the gas companies have trained householders into doing. Consequently inquisitive neighbors from beneath or above, or across the way, gossiped over the amount of company the Hopkinses seemed to be having lately, for a regular glare of illumination streamed out nightly from their windows.

It was a queer thing that no one seemed able to think of the family necessity till twilight came. Then regular remarks would be made, and Marion would blame Alice, and Alice would ask Tom why in the world he couldn't take a little responsibility, and Mr. Hopkins would inquire of his wife if there was no one in the family who could go surety for the appearance of some match boxes by the next even-



THEN HIS EYE FELL ON THE TABLE.

ing. And then next day Alice would come home from down town and her mother would ask her if she had remembered the match boxes, and blank is too feeble a word to describe the expression of her face on those several occasions.

For two weeks they said things under their breaths in the inky darkness, or burned gas recklessly. Then one morning Marion departed for her semi-weekly music lesson down town and said the same old thing—"I'm going to get some match boxes today"—and her mother smiled patiently and replied: "If you should happen to remember it, dear, you might get the whole number—eight."

That noon Alice came home from the north side, where she had been staying for a few days, and laid a parcel triumphantly in her mother's lap.

"I didn't even have them sent out," she said, gleefully. "I was so determined to have them here tonight. I was just getting on a car and happened to think of them by seeing a man light his cigar, so I got off. There are eight of them."

Mrs. Hopkins was properly glad and they laughed together over Marion's declaration that morning, and of how for the last time they would call that blank expression into play before they showed her that some one in the family had at last remembered. By and by Marion came.

"I've got them," she called. "The whole eight."

"Sixteen match boxes," said Mrs. Hopkins, with resignation. "Choose the prettiest, girls, and we'll put the rest away for another such emergency."

That evening Mr. Hopkins came in with his face wreathed in smiles.

"The young fry are so hot-headed these days," he remarked, as he complacently laid a knobby bundle in his wife's lap. "I'm sorry for Tom."

"What about Tom?" asked Mrs. Hopkins, as she felt suspiciously of the package.

"We had started home together," said Tom's father, the keenest enjoyment in his voice, "and were up to Van Buren, when Tom jumped up and made for the platform. I called to him and he yelled back 'Match boxes!' and shot out the door. I tried to get to him to tell him that I'd got the batch, but he was gone. What's the matter? Didn't I get enough?"

Alice exerted herself feverishly to get the twenty-four receptacles arranged on a table before Tom's arrival, and when Tom came he didn't for a minute understand his reception. Then his eye fell on the tableful of distorted shapes and he slowly added his quota to the general contribution, while his father gave an impromptu lecture on haste vs. waste. The Hopkins family have concluded to give match boxes for Christmas presents this year.

She Knew.

"What are pauses?" the teacher asked the first class in grammar.

"Things that grows on cats and dogs," answered the smallest girl.

Some people are willing to be good if paid for it and others are good for nothing.

In the smallest cottage there is room enough for two lovers.—Schiller.

Cast Care to the Winds.

Holly berries red and bright,
Wealth of candles flick'ring light,
  Christmas in the air!
Childish faces all aglow,
Outside sleigh bells in the snow—
  Banished is dull care.

Older wiseheads for the time
Join in sport and song and rhyme—
  Happy Chrismastide!
Mem'ry brings back golden youth,
Eyes then seeing only youth,
  Ever at its side.

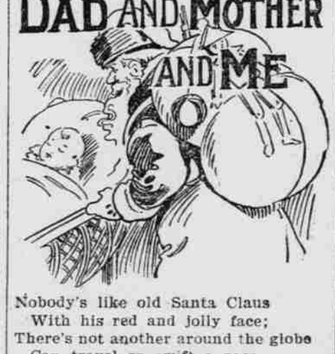
Joy tonight is crowned the queen
Of the festive Christmas scene.
  May her rule be long!
None can claim a rebel heart
With her foll'wers forms a part—
  Theirs a gladsome song!

The Christmas Dinner.

Christmas days and Christmas dinners are essentially of the home. "As sad as a Christmas dinner away from home," is a comparison whose strength has stood the test of endless repetition. The birth of Christ created the first Christmas home. It was only a stable, to be sure, but there was Joseph and Mary and the new born babe. There are thousands upon thousands of those "elder ones" in the old farmhouses and in the homesteads which stand back from the village street who now with hand-shaded eyes are looking along the road to the four corners or down the tree-guarded walk to the swinging gate for the homecoming of the boys and girls. Grown men and women, with children tugging at their skirts, they may be, but they are boys and girls now and forever to the old couple who await their coming.

Corporations, as it has been said, may have no souls, but something seems to touch them along about Christmas, even though it necessitates a subsequent month of privation. The keeping of the railroad rates at the normal figure would not turn back one in ten, though the ticket took the pocket money to the last dime. There are few railroad managements, however, that are not now sending broadcast notices under whose business-like statements of mileage rates and round trip ticket prices the man whose heart is at a farmhouse miles away reads this: "You may go home and take Christmas dinner with the old folks and have enough money left to take them a remembrance besides."

Christmas dinner is to be eaten at home; this has come to be regarded as a duty, and it is one of those duties in the fulfillment of which no man or woman nor boy nor girl finds anything but pleasure. The holiday week is a time which is given over by the moderns to a round of merrymaking. It was the custom of their ancestors in Old England and in the continental countries. It was a custom that went into some little disuse where the leaven of Puritanism made its power felt. But the Puritan relaxed and with the recognition of his day of Thanksgiving by the Cavalier of the South the Puritan absorbed not a little of the gay spirit of Christmastide, which was the season of seasons for his southern fellow countrymen. There are now dancing and gayety at Christmas from East Cape in Puritan New England to the southernmost point of California. But nowhere in all that vast country which comes between these nethermost points of this land can there be found a place where the sacredness of Christmas dinner to the home circle is not maintained, nor where the tie of home life is not strong enough to lead to the homestead the feet of all wanderers that they may pass the threshold in time for mother's Christmas dinner.



Nobody's like old Santa Claus
  With his red and jolly face;
There's not another around the globe
  Can travel so swift a pace.
His twinkling eyes, and his merry laugh,
  His chuckle of bubbling glee—
Nobody else is so dear by half
  To Dad and Mother and Me.

He doesn't forget the baby sweet
  As she rocks in her cradle white;
He has time to wait for the lagging feet
  Of his old, by candle-light.
He has gifts and gifts for the young and gay,
  Who encircle the Christmas Tree;
And he has the love to his latest day
  Of Dad and Mother and Me.

The frost is chill in the nipping blast,
  Smooth is the icy mere;
The short fleet days go hurrying past
  To the last of the waning year.
And never was nose of the summer's prime
  So royally fair to see
As the rose that blooms in the winter's rime
  For Dad and Mother and Me.

—Collier's Weekly.

A Child's Query.

In all the Santa Claus pictures,
  I've seen in my little day,
He's traveling across the snow-drifts
  With a reindeer before a sleigh.

And this is the thing about it,
  I'd really like to know—
Does he travel in a wagon
  When there isn't any snow?

—Newspaper Clipping.

A Lover's Wish.

Since you cannot, will not, dear,
  Give your tricksy heart,
Let me murmur in your ear
  Joy you may impart.
Write to kind old Santa Claus—
  Plead—as I would woo—
Beg him just to send to me
  Christmas dream of you.

People who did not know the Bertrams wondered how it were possible for so many children to live in so small a house. When Dr. Bertram built the house it was considered of very good size, but that was many years ago, and since then five bright, happy children had come to crowd the little brown house. On one side of them lived a little boy who was an only child and the idol of his father and mother. He had the enviable reputation of having everything he wanted. When some of the little Bertrams wished they were as fortunate as Lawrence Cole, their sister Helen, who was 14, would say:

"Oh, it wouldn't be nice to have all the things we want—there wouldn't be anything to wish for, and wishing is such fun!"

Of their neighbor on the other side the children stood in great awe. He was a bachelor named Samuel Jorden, who lived all alone, and who detested children; and how in the world he happened to build a house right next to the little brown house full of them is not known.

But, in spite of all the wealth on either side of them, the Bertrams were the happiest, most contented of families. There was always such fun there, with never a dull day, so that every child in the neighborhood loved to go there, but after dinner at night was the jolliest time, when Dr. Bertram was at home. They would all gather around the open fire in the library and everyone had to tell what he and she had been doing all day. Then they would have a little music from Helen and her mother, and the girl would transfer them all to an ideal world with the music from her violin. Then came the procession to bed, where Marjorie would be carried, half asleep. The queer thing about the Bertram family was that everyone was utterly different in look and character, so that one never knew just which one they loved best.

It was only the third day before Christmas, when Dorothy, who was just "half past six," went up stairs to find her mother. She had a wistful look on her little face that one could never resist.

"Mother, dear, have I got something for everybody now?"

"Yes, Dorothy, I think you have, and you have helped me very much, besides," answered her mother.

"Well, then, would you please give me just fifteen cents more and let me go out all alone and spend it?"

"Why, yes, my child, you may have that. I suppose it is some great mystery, isn't it, and I mustn't ask?" said Mrs. Bertram.

"No, please don't ask—ever!" said the child earnestly.

"Ever!" thought her mother, as the child went out, "what can she be going to do with it?

It was almost dark when Dorothy opened the door of a florist's little shop, two blocks down the street. Never was a child who loved flowers more than this little maid, and she would talk to them as she would to her dolls. She was a frequent visitor at this shop, and when the other children hurried off to a candy store with an occasional five cents, she usually spent hers for a few pretty flowers. So as she stood there hesitatingly, the man smiled and asked her what she wished.

"I want all you can give me of some kind that smells sweet, for fifteen cents. I suppose the flowers are all very dear, aren't they?" she added dubiously, but the man had disappeared inside the glass closet, and when he brought out a lovely bunch of Dorothy's favorite cinnamon pinks, she fairly danced. He was very generous with his little customer and gave her eight blossoms, sweet and fresh.

It was quite dark when Dorothy arrived home, but she went straight on past her door, and, wonder of wonders! she turned in at the gate of Mr. Jorden's house!

"Please might I see Mr. Jorden for a minute?" she asked the astonished maid who opened the door just wide enough to look out.

"Well, I never! you don't know how

"I WANT ALL YOU CAN GIVE ME."

he hates children, I guess," she said, opening the door wider.

A big lump, which she tried to swallow, came up in Dorothy's throat.

"Yes, I do, but may I just see him a minute? I won't bother him."

"Well, I don't know what he'll say, I'm sure," said the girl, as she led the way through the beautiful hall to a door at which she knocked.

"Here, sir, is one of them children that lives next door. She's got some message, I guess."

And in one second Dorothy found the door shut behind her, and there, in the chair before the fire, sat Mr. Jorden.

"Well, what is it you want, little girl?" said he as he turned toward her. "Be quick, for I am very busy."

"Oh, are you busy?" asked Dorothy, surprised, because he was not doing anything but looking at the fire. "I—I only wanted to give you these, sir, and I'll go right away.

The man stared hard at the white paper parcel she held out to him.

"Flowers?" said he.

"Yes."

"For what, may I ask?"

"Just for Christmas, because you live all alone. Good-bye," and she was gone.

The pretty flowers had begun to fade by the warm fire before Mr. Jorden came out of the brown study into which he had fallen.

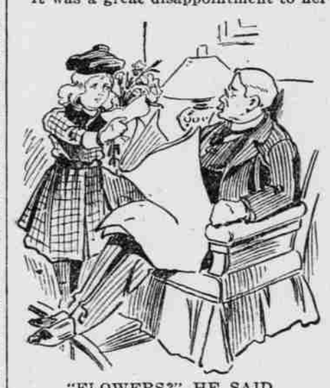
"God bless her brave little heart," said he, as he held Dorothy's flowers.

The first joy of the Christmas tree was over, the presents were all distributed, and every one of the little Bertrams were sitting around admiring the candles and the clever trimming of the tree.

"There goes the door bell again," said someone.

"Do you think Santa Claus has come back?" asked Marjorie.

It was a great disappointment to her



"FLOWERS?" HE SAID.

when she saw her mother shaking hands with Mr. Jorden. He looked rather sad, though he smiled at them all. There was a bright carnation in his buttonhole, the sight of which made Dorothy want to get behind someone.

"How happy you look," said the visitor, sitting down. "I could see you through my side windows—I have often looked in upon you, and tonight I took the liberty of joining you for half an hour. Shall I intrude?"

"Not at all," said Dr. Bertram. "You are very welcome."

Mr. Jorden drew Dorothy toward him and kissed her.

"Do you know," he said, turning to look at them all, "that a man may grow to be fifty years old and learn for the first time what he should always have known. It is this little girl who has taught me how sweet and comforting a child may be, and I used to think they were put into the world only to annoy people."

This was Mr. Jorden's conversion, and though all the children grew to love him, it was Dorothy who became his daily companion and friend.

The Christmas Tree.

The Christmas tree which enters very largely into our festival comes to us from Germany, where, on the eve of the anniversary, a tree is set up in nearly every household, bright with candles and paper decorations of various colors. Underneath the tree are put the presents that each member of the family is to give to the others, and when the tree is still burning, amid the laughter and shouting of the children, the presents are distributed.

In Germany, too, St. Nicholas comes around three weeks before Christmas. It is St. Nicholas' day, and the children on this day make known their wants for the Christmas season. Then he is supposed to drive away to an unknown land and get his loads of goods, bringing them back for the Christmas stockings.

Christmas Waits.

In England the "waits" are musicians who play throughout the towns and cities at night, for two or three weeks preceding Christmas. They call on the inhabitants for donations. At one time it was the custom to let out this privilege to one man, who was privileged to hire as many waits as he chose and to take a goodly percentage of the profits, none others but his players being allowed to engage in this occupation.

Answer.

There ain't no flies on Santa Claus,
  He's neither old-fashioned nor slow,
I know how he comes to our houses,
  When there isn't any snow.

He comes not in any old wagon,
  He's smart and as sharp as an icicle,
He straps his pack tight on his back
  And wheels into town on his bicycle.

—Carrie S. Hutton.

A Bit of Deception.

She stood beneath no chandelier
  Entwined with mistletoe;
I glanced the hall-length far and near,
  I looked both high and low;
No license for a kiss was hung,
  'Twas near a failure flat,
When lo, I spied a sprig among
  The feathers on her hat.

Roy Farrell Greene.

If you lose the habit of giving you lose the happiness of living.

Scaring Santa Claus.

You afraid of Santa Claus? Goodness me, I'm not!
  I'm lots too big to let him make me scared;
'Sides, a year ago I saw him, right on Christmas eve,
  So now he wouldn't scold me if he dared!

Yes, sirree! He's big an' fat, like his pictures are;
  An' I was sittin' by the chimley, too
When he lit right on the hearth, shook the snow flakes off,
  An' turned to me, an says: "Why, howdy do?"

Nen I run back to the door—so's to lock him in—
  "I'm pretty well," I says; an' nen we sat,
An' talked a lot about his work, an' he told me, he did,
  'Twas hard to get around when you're so fat.

Bime-by I says, "I hope you won't forget me Christmas day,
  Although I'm not the best of children, 'cause
If you should do so, I'm afraid I'd have to tell the boys
  That b'lieve in you 'There ain't no Santa Claus!'"

My! Didn'e he turn pale! He caught holt o' my hand;
  Says "Don't do that, please, for—I like you,
I'll give you heaps o' things you want, 'f you'll b'lieve in me,
  An' let the other children do so too!"

So we made a 'greement, an' I will have some things
  At Christmas time, you bet! What's that you say?
Don't b'lieve I ever scared old Santa Claus? Well now,
  Jest ask him, if you see him Christmas day!

—Selected.

Old English Customs.

It was customary in former days, in Cornwall, England, for the people to meet on Christmas eve at the bottom of the deepest mines and have a midnight mass.

In some parts of Derbyshire the village choir assemble in the church on Christmas eve and there wait until midnight, when they proceed from house to house, invariably accompanied by a keg of ale, singing "Christians, Awake!" During the week they again visit the principal houses in the place, and having played and sang for the evening, and partaken of the Christmas cheer, are presented with a sum of money.

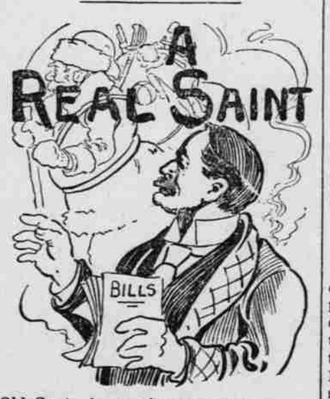
In Chester and its neighborhood numerous singers parade the streets, and are hospitably entertained with meat and drink at the various houses where they call.

The "ashton fagot" is burned in Devonshire. It is composed entirely of ash timber, the separate branches bound with ash bands and made as large as can be admitted to the floor of the fireplace. When the fagot blazes a quart of cider is called for and served upon the bursting of every hoop or band around the fagot. The timber being green and elastic, each band bursts with a loud report.

In one or two localities it is still customary for the farmer, with his family and friends, after partaking together of hot cakes and cider (the cakes being dipped into the liquor previous to being eaten) to proceed to the orchard, one or the party bearing hot cake and cider as an offering to the principal apple tree. The cake is formally deposited on the fork of the tree and the cider thrown upon the cake and tree.

A superstitious notion prevails in the western parts of Devonshire that at 12 o'clock at night on Christmas eve the oxen in their stalls are always found on their knees as in an attitude of devotion.

One John Martyn, by will, on Nov. 28, 1729, gave to the church wardens and overseers of the poor of the parish, St. Mary Major, Exeter, £20, to be put out at interest, and the profits thereof to be laid out every Christmas eve in twenty pieces of beef, to be distributed to twenty of the poorest people in the parish, said charity to be continued forever.



Old Santy is no phantom prim—
  The cheer he brings cures many ills;
Thro' dreamland's door we follow him,
  And lose the thought of New Year's bills.

"Weighing-in" at High Wycombe.

One of the most extraordinary civic customs that still survive is that of "weighing-in" the corporation of High Wycombe, England. After the election of the mayor is concluded, that functionary, the aldermen, and the councilors proceed to the borough office of weights and measures, where they are weighed, and their correct weights duly entered in a book. The policemen on duty are also included, and last year provided the heaviest man in the person of the senior sergeant, who scaled 18 stone, the light weight of the corporation being the town clerk, whose avoirdupois was barely nine stone.

Do not dare to live without some clear intention toward which your living shall be bent. Mean to be something with all your might.—Phillips Brooks.

Only the life that has mountain heights to tap the clouds can have fruitful valleys.

In the Public Eye

Chicago's Municipal Campaign.

Chicago is getting ready for another municipal election. The present Mayor Carter H. Harrison, who has been twice elected, will again be the candidate of the Democrats. Graeme Stewart, Illinois' member of the Republican

GRAEME STEWART.

National Committee, is already in the arena for his party's nomination, and it looks as if he would be Harrison's chief opponent. Like Harrison, he is a native of the city. He has long been high in the councils of the party in state and nation.

Boom for Oklahoma.

The Territory of Oklahoma is on the verge of a new boom. Within a few months President McKinley will throw open to settlers a former Indian reservation, embracing no less than two and a half million acres of land in the extreme southern part of the territory, bordered on the south by Texas and on the east by the Chickasaw Nation reservation. Of the land in the territory to be opened 50,000 acres will be reserved as a government reservation lying about Fort Sill and nearly 500,000 acres of allotments to the Indians of the three tribes who have disposed of their tribal holdings to the government. Of the remaining land only 80,000 acres are adapted to strictly agricultural purposes, the remainder being, however, good grazing territory. The opening proclamation will be issued as soon as the secretary of the interior has completed the work of allotting to the individual Indians the 160-acre plats to which each of them is entitled under the agreement of purchase.

The Territory to be Thrown Open.

Mrs. Stevens Chosen Again.

Mrs. Lillian M. N. Stevens, who has just been re-elected president of the

MRS. LILLIAN M. N. STEVENS.

Women's Christian Temperance Union, is a native of Dover, Me., and began her work as a teacher in her own state. At 21 she married Mr. Stevens and went with her husband to his home near Portland. Mrs. Stevens first met Miss Willard at Old Orchard in the summer of 1875, and there assisted in the organization of the Maine W. C. T. U. Her first office was that of treasurer of the state union. She next became president and under her guidance the Maine organization soon became conspicuous in the national union and its president no less conspicuous among the ladies at work in the temperance cause. Mrs. Stevens' advance in the union was rapid. She was elected vice president during the life of Miss Willard and succeeded that great reformer as president when Miss Willard died.

Rural Free Delivery.

One of the most gratifying features of the postmaster general's annual report is the statement that rural free delivery has been greatly extended in the last two years and that its operation has proved eminently successful. It has already passed the experimental stage and has been sufficiently tested to observe its effects. These, in the opinion of the postmaster general are now clearly apparent.

Roosevelt Is Not Rich.

As vice president Mr. Roosevelt will occupy a rented house in Washington, and his friends say it will not be an expensive residence, for the reason that the vice president elect is not a rich man. The property which his father left to him in New York yields him an annual income of $8,000 or $10,000 a year. Hence it is that Mr. Roosevelt feels called upon to engage deeply and constantly in literary work next year to increase his income, notwithstanding that it will be $16,000 or $18,000 a year anyhow.

Pope Leo XIII is one of the most sparing eaters among living men. A biscuit steeped in black coffee usually serves for his breakfast, a little soup and a little chicken and fruit for his dinner and the remnants from this meal are generally converted into his supper.

The sons of the late Arthur Sewall, was the democratic candidate for vice president four years ago, have endowed a free bed in the hospital at Bath, Me., in memory of their father.